

442 hundred percent within a few weeks. The Mandé-Dioula vie in eloquence, the Yarsé and Mossi in politeness, the Haoussa in friendliness. In fact, with exclusively native methods, this is a trading center in embryo, a veritable stock exchange." (4)

4. Marc, Au pays des Mossi /In Mossi Country/,
p. 173.

484 The traders travel in all directions. The roads most commonly
487 followed are those which run from Ouagadougou south to the Gold Coast, to Gambaga, Daboya, Salaga, Kintampo, Sékondi; from Leó through Oua and Salaga; and from Tenkodogo through Bitou to rejoin the Gambaga road. Contact also occurs, though less frequently, with German Togoland and the markets of Sansané-Mango and even Lomé on the coast.

489 These two British and German colonies are supplied with livestock and native fabrics by the Mossi. They completely lack butcher's meat, for the tsetse fly does not permit cattle to survive within the confines of the rain forest. Imported fabrics do not withstand a few washings, so the native fabric strips, although less bright in color, are preferred by the Gourounsi and forest dwellers. They formerly wore only a sheep or goat skin, but they have taken to clothes since the arrival of the Europeans. Their scant clothing does not embarrass them when they are among themselves, but they are ashamed when Europeans see them. The Mossi bring back from their journeys the kola nuts which are the basis of their import trade, but they also bring copper, European goods of all sorts, fabrics usually of inferior quality, matches, perfumes, pearls, sugar, and basins of all shapes and kinds. Trade is very active in the coastal areas, and Lt. Marc writes on the subject as follows: "The Gold Coast administration, which commands a network of posts denser than ours, recorded in 1904 and 1905 about 16, 000 beeves and 75, 000 sheep or goats coming from Mossi country. Considering that the Mossi also supply in part the Togoland markets and the Boudoukou market, their annual export may be estimated at a minimum of 20, 000 beeves and 100, 000 sheep. Their kola nut imports amount to at least 500 tons." (5)

5. Marc, op. cit., p. 178.

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631

651 because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to
 643 the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the
 114 Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived.
 [648] But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the
 [669] French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall
 probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's
 vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou.

It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

643

645 The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as
 692 a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines
 651 levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho
 [431] Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him
 even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as
 bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth
 is at Ouagadougou."

643

651 The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba,
 634 and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close rela-
 768 tives. He also received inheritance taxes (*fado*) from the estates of deceased
 [428] district chiefs. In collecting the *fado*, the Mogho Naba first retained the
 horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He
 reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to
 their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys
 claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for de-
 posit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the *fado*, and
 jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing
 less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had
 possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing,
 and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few
 old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventu-
 ally, they handed out the *fado*, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing,
 food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the
 envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

643

645 The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of
 651 revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market
 439 towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.* The Mossi (especially
 [487] the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their
 country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions.
 According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking

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the Niger River area to the Gold Coast and Togoland. Important stops were made at such Mossi centers as Ouagadougou, Bere, Dakay, La, Mane, Yako, and Koupela.⁶⁴⁵ At Dori, northwest of Ouagadougou, Barth found Mossi with "their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after." He adds that in addition, ⁶⁵¹ ⁴³⁹ ^[487] ^[443]

the people of Mossi supply this market with gabaga, or "tari" [cotton bands], as Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market places of that country, especially in Kul-fela [Koupela, but really at Poitenga a few miles away], an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells. . . . Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking-vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mossi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Ashanti.⁶

Dubois, one of the early visitors to Timbuktu, tells us that he saw Mossi men carrying on their traditional trade in that city. Mossi traders dealt in such diverse commodities as millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots, and calabashes. They traded these articles for needles, mirrors, beads, coral, amber, tea, coffee, perfumes, carpets, fezzes, tailored robes, and salt. What impressed Dubois most was that while the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding, and Touat enjoyed themselves at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasures with the freest morals in the Sudan," and spent a great deal of money in gifts to beautiful women, "the Mossi did not waste their money, and left as soon as they had finished their business."⁷ On the way south, Mossi and other caravaneers picked up goods from the Yatenga and other northern Ouagadougou provinces before stopping at the capital and then proceeding to the forest regions. ¹⁷⁵ ⁴³⁹

It is impossible to determine the exact volume of caravan trade that passed through Mossi country, and the amount of revenue it brought to the Mossi rulers. We can get some idea of this trade, however, by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest. ⁴³⁹ ^[651]

The official figures for 1901 and 1903 are as follows:¹⁰

Year	Horses	Head of Cattle	Sheep and Goats	Loaded Donkeys	Bales of Cotton Cloth
1901.....	126	3,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903.....	196	6,624	30,392	4,294	269

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long been famous. The former are sometimes ridden but are used primarily as beasts of burden. Horses were and are still important for military and ceremonial purposes and for external trade to other areas. ²³¹₂₃₂₂₃₃

The Mossi have never excelled in metalworking. The people in the northern part of the country have worked indigenous ores since aboriginal times. Those in the south get iron mainly from traders and caravans. The other metals which the Mossi smiths manufacture into tools and ornaments are also obtained from traders. ³²⁶₃₂₇₃₂₈

TRADE IN HISTORICAL TIMES

The geographic position of Mossi country has much to do with its being an important trade and market center. The country itself has always produced grain, cotton and livestock for export. And for several centuries caravans have passed through this region carrying Sudanese and Saharan products to the forest zones to the south, and carrying forest products back to the arid north. The beginning of this trade is lost in the dim past, but it safe to say that it developed shortly after or along with the founding of Timbuktu about 1100 A.D. The Mossi themselves were not definitely linked to this important *entrepot* until they raided it in 1528, but we can assume that they had been trading there for some time before that event took place. Similarly, we have no record of when the Mossi began trading with the forest zones, but we can also assume that this trade began around the same period or even before. ¹³¹₄₃₇₄₃₈

Our first evidence of Mossi trade and commerce comes from Europeans who were themselves interested in conducting their own trading activities with the peoples in the Bend of the Niger. Bowditch, an Englishman who had journeyed to Ashanti to sign a treaty facilitating the reopening of a profitable trade with the coast, wangled the first important piece of information about the Mossi from his reluctant hosts. ¹²⁵₄₃₇

Five journeys from Yngwa is Mosee, a more warlike but less visited kingdom: it consists of many states, but the superior monarch is named Billa, and the capital Kookoopella. I place it to the N.W. because its merchants pass by Yngwa; they do not cross the Karhalla [White Volta] nor any river which is not fordable. (Bowditch 1819: 180) ¹⁰¹₃₃₁

This information is not strictly correct since Koupela was not the capital of any of the Mossi kingdoms, but Bowditch's informant had probably heard of Koupela because it was the largest political entity near the large caravan center at Pouitenga. ³⁶⁶

¹⁷⁵
⁴³⁷ Dupuis, who replaced Bowditch in Kumasi in 1817, obtained surprisingly good data on trade relations between the Ashanti and the Mossi, considering the reluctance of the middlemen traders to furnish any help in this matter. He discovered that Ashanti traders

[103] ... sometimes travel as far as Aughoa, the Magho, and to the east of Kasogho. Aughoa is distant from Coomassie twenty-five journeys by the Salgha and Yandy Roads, which would give a distance of three hundred that vegetable substance ... by the name of Shea butter. (Dupuis 1824 : App. cvii)¹

The Hausa merchants and caravaneers knew a great deal about the Mossi and their resources, but it was only with great difficulty that Clapperton persuaded Sultan Mohammed Bello of Sokoto to give him the following information:

[101] The country of Mouchier or Mouchi is situated to the west of Ghurma. It is vast and possesses a gold mine, rivers, forests and mountains. It is inhabited by tribes of the Sudan who possess many fast horses, and large donkeys. Their king is called Wagadougou; their asses are sent down to the Gondja to carry the drums of the army. (Clapperton 1829 : 323)

It is obvious that either Clapperton or his informant confused the capital of the Mossi with their king, and included parts of Ghana in their territory. Nevertheless, one does get an indication of the importance of live-stock in Mossi trading.

The great bulk of the trade between the Mossi and their neighbors to the north and to the south was done through the medium of caravans which crisscrossed their territory. The first person to signal the existence of these caravans was Barth (1859 : III, 646-648) who, although he did not enter Mossi country during his extensive travels in the Sudan from 1849 to 1855, reported the existence of several caravan routes which traversed the Mossi from the desert to the forest. The first route he described proceeded from "Kirotashi, a town on the east side of the Niger, one day south of Say, to Woghodogho." Ten days out of Kirotashi caravans usually reached Tengkodogo, and on the thirteenth day they arrived at Koupele which according to

(1) The Aughoa referred to here is really "Wagha," the term often used by the Mossi when talking about their capital, Waghadougou. Magho is really "Mogho" the name of Mossi country itself, and Kasogho is the name of a province of Waghadougou commanded by a minister of the Moro Naba, the Kasogho Naba. Dupuis' report on the actual distance between Kumasi and Waghadougou is almost the same mileage as that of today. Koelle (1854 : 6) received a report from a slave liberated in Sierra Leone in 1854 that the great Mossi trading center "Kupele is four days from Wardugu, the Mossi capital, whither the king of Asante often sends presents; and one month from Salak (Salaga), an Asante town, where they bring their cola-nuts."

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Barth was "a well-frequented market place of Mosi, and of greater importance than all the other towns of Mosi; the governor's name is Nabere Gager. The inhabitants are celebrated archers." Barth states that by the fifteenth day, or two days later, the caravans usually arrived at Wagadougou, but he tells us in a note that:

Other people, in going slowly from Kulfela to Woghodogho, spend eight days on the road, sleeping the first night in Pashipanga, the second in Tangay, the third in Zorogo, the next in a place ruled by a man called Mane Bogonje, the fifth in another village called Tangay, and reach Woghodogho on the eighth. (Marc 1909: 27)³

Finally, he reports that another spur of this caravan route ran from Tengkodogo to Sansanne Mangho, in what is now Togoland. This journey took five days.

The second caravan route described by Barth ran from Djibo, the capital of the province of Gilgoi or Jilgodi (about 60 miles south from Montdoro, 55 miles West-Southwest from Aribinda and 35 miles South-Southwest from Tinie) by way of Kaya, to Mane and finally to Wagadougou. A caravan leaving Djibo entered Kelbo, the first village of the territory of Mossi on the eighth day, but according to Barth the "border district in general is regarded as very unsafe." On the fourteenth day the caravan entered Kaya;

... an important place where several roads meet. And from Kaya the route went to Wagadougou by way of Boussouma, Mane and Yako. It took a caravan ten days to traverse it.⁴

The third major caravan route that Barth described lay entirely within Mossi country. It ran from Mane to "Yadega" (probably Wahigouya, the capital of the kingdom of Yatenga) by way of Yako, and it took a caravan eight days to travel it. The fourth caravan route lay between Mane and a place called Kong by way of Tema, Yako, La and other places. On the tenth day a caravan reached Kong;

... a large place, according to my informant, inhabited by Bambara. It can scarcely be identical with the well-known Kong, if the itinerary be correct; but nevertheless it may be the case.

The first day after the caravan left Kong to return to Mane, it

(3) Barth received fairly accurate information about the caravan routes, and Marc was impressed with his data. Nevertheless, Marc finds it impossible to believe that caravans took two days to travel the twenty-five miles between Tengkodogo and Koupela, and only two more days to travel the ninety odd miles from Koupela to Wagadougou. Barth obviously erred here, but the timetable he gives for those persons "going slowly" from Koupela to Wagadougou appears to be quite correct.

(4) It is highly unlikely that a caravan going to Wagadougou from Kaya would have gone through Mane and Yako unless the caravaners were interested in tapping the resources of these two western towns before heading straight south to their destination.

175 stopped at "Fura, a large market place." On the fourth day it stopped
 437 at Dullugu (probably present-day Doulougou), and on the fifth day
 487 at "Dakay [or Rakay] a place belonging to the territory of Mosi."
 103 Finally, on the thirteenth day it arrived at Mane.⁴ The last caravan
 route that Barth reported ran from:

Kaye to Belussa [Boulsa], and thence to Belanga [Bilanga] ... From Belussa a person on horseback reaches Belanga comfortably the second day, the great station between these two towns being Alitinga, still belonging to Mosi, and an important place, inhabited by Mosi and Hausa traders; but common native travellers generally halt twice between Belanga and Alitinga, in Nyennyega and Koburi [Kouri], and once between Alitinga and Belanga, in a Gurma village called Yamba.

175 The goods which these caravans carried appear to have varied a
 437 great deal. Barth met a Mossi caravan at Dori, southeast of Timbuktu,
 479 and reported that to this market:

[23] The people of Mosi bring chiefly their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after; and a numerous body of people of the Sheikh A'hmedu, of Hamda-Ailahi, had left a few days before with a number of asses which they had brought here. Besides asses, the people of Mosi supply this market [135] with gabaga [cotton strips] or tari, as the Arabs near Timbuktu call them, [139] cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market place of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Pouitenga a few miles away] an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells ... Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mosi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Asanti. (Barth 1859: III, 203-4)

Adolphe Krause, a German who was actually the first European to enter Mossi country, went through Wagadougou with a load of kola nuts destined for Timbuktu. He joined the caravan at Salaga on July 7, 1885, stopped at the Bere market in Mossi country during August, and then proceeded to their capital where he remained until October 26 before resuming his northward journey (Krause 1887-8).

Felix Dubois, who visited Timbuktu in 1895, gives us some information on the actual products which the Mossi traded there. He reported that the Mossi came to the market organized into caravans of oxen, donkeys and porters, and brought such commodities as live-stock, millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots and calabashes. These goods the Mossi

(⁴) Barth's skill as a reporter is evident here. He is quite correct in disbelieving that the caravans could have reached Kong on the tenth day. Marc. 1909, agrees with Barth.

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People also assemble sheep of
 the Mossi variety, which are very puny. The larger variety of long-haired Macina sheep are seldom exported. Once the livestock has been assembled, the chief of the caravan would also provide himself with cotton bands. This native fabric has often been described; it is commonly used on the caravan routes to pay for the food of the travellers. (Marc 1909 : 172)

Most of the caravans through Mossi country traveled as much as fifteen or twenty miles a day. They left at the first sign of dawn, traveled steadily until the heat became too intense, and then stopped to rest. They resumed their march when the sun was midway between the zenith and the horizon, and then stopped at some village or stream for the night. This schedule was followed on the next day if the caravan was far from a market center, but in the vicinity of a large market the caravan might remain stationary as many as six days while its merchants traded for more livestock or merchandise. This being the case, it is difficult to gauge how long it took the caravans to make the journey from Salaga in Ghana to Timbuktu. Our best data come from an analysis of Krauss' itinerary. He left Salaga with a caravan on July 7, 1885, heading north through Walwale, and arrived in Bere, a distance of some 250 miles (today's road mileage) towards the end of August. Famine delayed the caravan at Bere for some time, and he did not complete the 50 miles or so to Wagadougou until September 24. He remained in the Mossi capital until October 26, some thirty-two days, before his caravan headed north again through Tema, Yatenga and Bandiagara. Krauss does not tell us when he reached Douentza, some 400 miles northwest of Wagadougou, or how long he remained there, but on December 7, a few days after he had left Douentza on the last 200- or 250-mile leg of his voyage to Timbuktu, the Moro Naba ordered him to return to Wagadougou. It is possible that it took Krauss' caravan some thirty-five odd days to make the trip from Wagadougou to Douentza. His return to Wagadougou took him only about thirty days, since he arrived there on January 7, 1886. He apparently had to wait some fifteen days there for a caravan going south, because he did not leave the Mossi capital until January 22, 1886 (Krauss 1887-88). Judging from this itinerary, it probably took caravans between five and six months to travel from the forest zones to the desert, a distance of about a thousand miles at the most. This averages about six or seven miles a day, with the normal stops for rest and marketing, instead of the fifteen or twenty miles a day which the average caravan covered when it was on the road.

The caravans did not encounter many dangers or difficulties during their voyage. When the caravaneers had friends along the way they stopped at their friends' homes for the night, and when they camped in uninhabited places men were posted to protect the goods and livestock against marauding beasts and thieves.

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When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?" the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capitals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Christians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional ancestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies except those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more persons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*